

# Legislative News



February 19, 2010

## New Higher Education Bills:

**HB 2003 Icel** (R-Wildwood)  
Appropriates money for the expenses, grants, refunds, and distributions of the Department of Higher Education.

**HB 2066 Morris** (D-St. Louis)  
Creates the Missouri Clean Energy Technology Center.

**HB 2147 Brown** (R-Rolla)  
Exempts students who are dependents of retired military from the three-year attendance requirement under the A+ Program when certain conditions are met.

**HJR 56 Emery** (R-Lamar)  
Proposes a constitutional amendment replacing the individual and corporate income tax and sales and use tax with a fair sales tax on retail sales of new tangible property and taxable services.

**SB 907 Rupp** (R-Wentzville)  
Creates the Early High School Graduation Scholarship Program for public high school students who graduate from high school early.

**SB 936 Pearce** (R-Warrensburg)  
Establishes the Missouri Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Initiative within the Department of Higher Education.

**SB 939 Barnitz** (D-Lake Spring)  
Modifies the use of the Consumer Price Index to measure tuition rates for public institutions of higher education.

**SB 963 Shoemyer** (D-Clarence)  
Transfers the administration of the Minority and Underrepresented Environmental Literacy Program from the Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Higher Education.

## Senate Education Committee Hears from Students, Institutional Leaders, and the MDHE

On February 17, the [Senate Education Committee](#) heard testimony about a bill that would change Access Missouri award amounts starting in the 2014-15 academic year. [SB 784](#), sponsored by Senators [Kurt Schaefer](#) and [David Pearce](#), would increase awards for students at community colleges and public universities, and decrease awards for students at private institutions. Supporters and opponents of the legislation filled the Senate Lounge, where the committee meeting took place, and testified in a steady stream during the hour and a half dedicated to the hearing.

Student members of ASUM, the [Associated Students of the University of Missouri](#), spoke in support of the bill. They made points about the fairness of equal award amounts and the importance of Access Missouri in their own academic careers. [Brady Deaton](#), chancellor of the [University of Missouri-Columbia](#), and [Mike Nietzel](#), president of [Missouri State University](#), also testified in support of the bill.

Their testimony also focused on issues of fairness and public policy – as well as on the political environment in which the original Access Missouri program was passed. Access Missouri was created by [SB 389](#) (2007), a higher education omnibus bill that included, among other things, funding for the [Lewis and Clark Discovery Initiative](#).

[Dr. Robert Stein](#), Commissioner of Higher Education testified against the bill, as did many students from private institutions and some presidents from those institutions. Dr. Stein testified that the [Coordi-](#)

[nating Board](#) had voted to oppose the bill based on the fact that the process used to develop the initial award amounts was a collaboration between financial aid officers at a variety of colleges and universities. He said that the CBHE is committed to working with a group of stakeholders to take another look at the program. Students and institutional representatives testified about how important Access awards are to students at independent institutions, and how the total subsidy they receive from the state is actually less than the total subsidy received by students at public colleges and universities.

## Truman State University Names New President

[Truman State University](#) has named Dr. Troy Paino as the next president of the



Truman State University's Kirk Memorial.

university. Paino, who is currently the university's vice-provost and vice-president of academic affairs, will succeed Dr. Darrell Krueger, who is retiring. Paino will officially begin his new duties in May.

## LEGISLATIVE NEWS

### Update on MDHE Budget

The [House Appropriations Committee for Education](#) heard testimony from institutional presidents and other leaders as it continues to consider the FY 2011 higher education budget. The committee was impressed with the presentations, especially in terms of the level of preparation that has begun for the possibility of major budget cuts in FY 2012. The committee will entertain amendments to the Gov-

ernor's recommendations next week. The chair, [Representative Mike Thomson](#), has already indicated that he does not intend to reduce institutional operating budgets beyond the 5.2% in the Governor's budget. This is good news for schools as well as for students as it will preserve the tuition freeze agreement through this step of the process.



A look up at the Capitol on a sunny day.

### Early High School Graduation Scholarship



The sign that hangs outside of the entrance to the Senate Gallery.

A new bill was filed in the Senate that would give high school students who graduate early a scholarship to help pay for college. [SB 907](#), sponsored by [Senator Scott Rupp](#), would offer students who graduate from a public high school in forty-one months or less, and meet other requirements set forth in the bill, a scholarship in an amount equal to eighty percent of the state aid attributable to

that student for the school district. The student's high school will be offered a grant in an amount equal to twenty percent of the state aid attributable to that student for the school district.

This scholarship could be used for tuition, mandatory fees, or both regardless of the student chooses to attend a public or private institution in Missouri. Students would have to

utilize this award within one year of graduation unless an exception is approved.

This bill is scheduled to be heard by the [Senate Education Committee](#) on February 24 at 3:00 p.m. in the Senate Lounge.

### Bond Issue Legislation

Lawmakers announced Thursday that Missouri cannot afford to issue \$800 billion in bonds to fund construction and maintenance on state buildings, including some on college campuses. Despite the support for this bill last year, legislators on both sides of the aisle have indicated that with the current budget worries, incurring more debt is not an option for the state.

This means that [Representative Chris Kelly's HJR 77](#) will almost certainly not

make any progress this legislative session. Kelly says that the logic behind the proposed amendment is still there and that it makes sense for Missouri to issue the bonds so the state can take advantage of the current low interest rates and construction costs.

### Missouri Returning Heroes' Education Act

This week, the [House Higher Education Committee](#) held a public hearing for [HB 1504](#), which would change the [Missouri Returning Heroes' Education Act](#). Currently, the benefits created by the Act are only available to veterans who served in armed combat on or after September 11, 2001. [Rep. Rob Schaaff's](#) bill would remove the September 11, 2001, date and allow veterans who served in com-

bat before then to utilize the program's benefits. Furthermore, it would ensure that individuals who had been home-schooled receive the same consideration for financial aid that individuals who attend public schools would receive.

The House Higher Education Committee may vote on this bill upon adjournment on February 23 in the House Chamber South Gallery.

## LEGISLATIVE NEWS

## House Committee Considers Access Missouri

The [House Higher Education Committee](#) heard testimony on [Representative Mike Thomson's HB 1473](#) on February 3. HB 1473 would change the grade point average required for some Access Missouri students to receive renewal awards. Current law requires students to maintain a 2.5 GPA in order to get a renewal award for Access Missouri. Thomson's bill would lower that requirement for freshmen going into their sophomore years. Those students would only have to maintain a 2.0, then bring their GPA up to a 2.5 before their junior years.

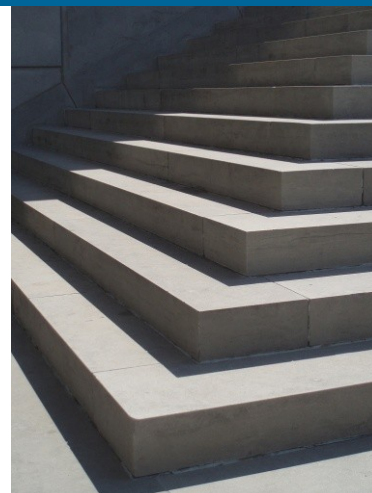
Representatives of several colleges and universities

testified in support of the bill, as did a representative for the [MDHE](#). Supporters told the committee that many students struggle in their first year of college, and just need a little bit of time to find their feet. This is especially true of low income students, students who are the first members of their families to attend college, and students in particularly challenging academic programs or institutions.

Although no one testified against the bill, committee members had many questions for the bill's sponsor and the people who testified in support of the bill. Several committee members were concerned about the idea that lower-

ing the GPA requirement for some students would lower academic standards. Committee members were also concerned that keeping more students in the pool of students eligible to receive Access awards would reduce the dollar amount of each recipients' award.

The committee has not yet voted on this bill, but is expected to do so next week.



Stairs leading up to the Capitol's entrance

## Governor Nominates New Member to Coordinating Board for Higher Education

[Governor Jay Nixon](#) has nominated Craig A. Van Matre of Columbia to the [Coordinating Board for Higher Education](#). If he is confirmed by the Senate, Van Matre will replace Helen Washburn, whose term has expired.

## Upcoming Committee Meetings

The [House Budget Committee](#) will meet Monday, February 22 upon afternoon adjournment in HR 3. The committee will hear the following bill:

[Rep. Allen Icet's HJR 87](#), which proposes a constitutional amendment prohibiting appropriations in any fiscal year from exceeding certain limits. This bill includes elements of the "Taxpayer Bill of Rights" (TABOR) act passed in Colorado. It links the amount state appropriations may increase to CPI.

The Senate Education Committee will meet Wednesday, February 24 at 3:00 p.m. in the Senate Lounge. The committee will hear the following bills:

[Sen. Jolie Justus' SB 783](#), which parallels Kansas' DREAM Act and provides that certain aliens will receive in-state tuition at colleges and universities that meet certain requirements.

[Sen. David Pearce's SB 733](#), which modifies renewal requirements for recipients of the Bright Flight Scholarship Program who have completed military service. Under current law, all students who defer their Bright Flight awards must return to school within 27 months. This bill would allow students who enter the military to defer Bright Flight awards as long as they are in the military, so long as they return to school within 6 months of their separation from the military.

[Sen. Scott Rupp's SB 907](#), which creates the Early High School Graduation Scholarship Program for public high school students who graduate from high school early.

[Sen. Frank Barnitz's SB 939](#), which modifies the use of the Consumer Price Index to measure tuition rates for public institutions of higher education